



Title of the post: Executive Assistant to the Vice-Chancellor
Permanent / Full Time

Department: Vice-Chancellor's Office

Reporting to: Vice-Chancellor

The University

Background

Harper Adams University is the leading UK Higher Education (HE) institution university tackling the future development of the world's food production, animal sciences, engineering, land management and sustainable business.

Situated on a single campus in rural and scenic Shropshire, the University, and its surrounding area, provide an excellent working and living environment for staff and students alike, yet the University campus is only one hour from the UK's second city of Birmingham. Around 3,000 HE students attend the University, primarily on sandwich courses, which include a year-long industrial placement. Undergraduate and postgraduate degrees are offered. The University also welcomes individuals who wish to undertake CPD or similar professional training to support their careers in the agri-food chain and rural industries.

The University was founded by Thomas Harper Adams in 1901 on the original farmland of the Harper Adams Estate. The University estate includes amenity areas, woodland, and a commercial farm of 205 hectares; with rented land, the total area farmed is approximately 640 hectares, spread over several locations with cereals, potatoes, forage maize and grassland carrying a dairy herd, sheep, beef, pig and poultry units.

The Privy Council awarded taught degree awarding powers to Harper Adams in 1996 and research degree awarding powers in 2006. Full University Title was granted by Her Majesty's Privy Council in December 2012. The University changed its legal status to that of a Company Limited by Guarantee in July 2012 and remains one of a small number of Universities which are Registered Charities. Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal became the University's first Chancellor in 2013.

Academic Provision

The University offers a wide range of courses including Foundation and Honours degrees, in addition to shorter awards designed to meet the continuing professional development needs of those already in the workplace. The subjects are wide ranging and cover Agriculture, Applied Life Sciences, Animal Science and Health, Business, Countryside, Engineering, Food and Land & Property Management. The University has also focused on developing its postgraduate education and research and there are a growing number of postgraduate students at both diploma, masters and PhD level.

Harper Adams has built up an international reputation for the quality of its courses and has achieved the highest possible ratings in recent Quality Assurance Agency reviews, and holds a Gold Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award. There is active encouragement of research and the University took part in the last Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercise. 56% of our submitted research was rated either internationally excellent or world leading and 100% was rated of international quality. Our extensive programme of research and education for professionals in the land-based and food chain sectors supports a

high profile of business and community reach-out work, short course delivery for businesses and technology transfer activities supported by strong industry links and partnerships with companies including Saputo Dairy UK (formerly Dairy Crest), CLAAS and Ice Robotics.

Current high profile projects include the Hands Free Farm – following on from the world-first Hands Free Hectare autonomous farming success; controlled traffic farming and development of laser weeding.

Recognition

Harper Adams is consistently positioned highly in a range of national ratings, performance measures and league tables.

The University has been the highest performing modern university in The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide for the last four years, climbing to 17th place in the overall league table. In the 2020 guide Harper Adams is named Modern University of the Year and runner-up University of the Year.

In the QS World Rankings for Agriculture and Forestry published in March 2019, Harper Adams was ranked first in the UK for academic reputation and second in the world for its reputation with employers.

In the 2020 Whatuni? Student Choice Awards, based on student reviews, Harper Adams won the Student Support category for the fifth time – the only university to have taken the title since the awards began - and won the category for best job prospects for a fourth year running.

The university has also made great advances in the Complete University Guide, progressing from 84th to 27th place in five years.

Facilities

Harper Adams has extensive, well-equipped facilities and is constantly investing in its campus. Facilities include a range of modern teaching facilities and an extensive library, a variety of IT suites including an engineering design centre, newly extended laboratory facilities, a field laboratory and a livestock project centre, a glasshouse complex, an agricultural engineering unit with a large covered soil working area and a number of sustainable technology installations. New facilities opened since 2017 include new laboratories, an Agri-Tech Innovation Hub and SMART Dairy Unit. A new animal science and veterinary education centre is under development ahead of the opening of the Harper & Keele Veterinary School in 2020. Capital funding to support the development of many of these facilities has been provided through the work of the Development Trust. The University provides a range of training and professional development opportunities via its staff development programme.

Catering and Sports Facilities

The University's Students' Union operates a small gym and squash courts that staff may use on the payment of a nominal fee. The University has an open-air swimming pool bowling green and tennis courts that are available for staff use during the summer period. A variety of University catering outlets provide access to lunch facilities on campus.

For further details about the University, please visit our website:

<http://www.harper-adams.ac.uk>

Job Purpose

- The holder of this post will provide a comprehensive, proactive and professional high-quality executive support service to the Vice-Chancellor and, where required from time to time, to other members of the University's Senior Management Team. The post holder will also be responsible for:
 - The co-ordination of events run by the Vice-Chancellor's Office;
 - Assisting with other events and activities organised by other University departments; and
 - Liaison with a wide range of external bodies, often at very senior level, and the co-ordination of information from across the University.

Main Activities and Responsibilities:

- To provide confidential executive support for the Vice-Chancellor and, where required, other members of the senior management team, including:
 - Management of all aspects of the Vice-Chancellor's diary (electronic and written) including the effective organisation of travel, meetings, committees and events involving the Vice-Chancellor;
 - Commitment to organising and managing the flow of information, papers and correspondence in an increasingly paperless environment;
 - Managing the Vice-Chancellor's internal and external communications in a timely and appropriate fashion, including where necessary, reacting promptly outside of regular working hours;
 - Drafting letters, papers and reports to a high standard of presentation;
 - Preparing, collating and distributing information relating to various Committees, working groups and meetings, including electronic coordination of agendas, accompanying papers, attending meetings and taking minutes and dissemination of outcomes and actions;
 - Scheduling impending internal and external work requirements to ensure that the Vice-Chancellor and other members of the senior management team meet reporting deadlines, sometimes at short notice, and sometimes requiring attention outside of regular office hours;
 - Acting as the first point of contact for enquiries to the Vice-Chancellor's office, including those of a sensitive or confidential nature where tact, diplomacy and discretion are required;
 - Handling enquiries to the Vice-Chancellor's office that need to be relayed to other areas of the University and ensuring that an appropriate and timely response is provided;
 - Arrangement of all aspects of domestic and international travel, including visa and accommodation requirements for the Vice-Chancellor and, where required, for other staff attending events and activities away from the University;
 - Production of papers, reports, analyses of data and other documents drafted or required by the Vice-Chancellor or, where relevant, by other members of the senior management team;
 - Management of the budgets assigned to the Vice-Chancellor's office, the payment of the Vice-Chancellor's expenses, the processing of orders and invoices and liaison with the University's Finance Office on aspects of procurement and budgetary management;
 - Arranging teleconferences or meetings for the Vice-Chancellor, including liaising with senior staff in external bodies with which the University works and arrangements for the meeting location;
 - Managing an efficient and effective paper and electronic document filing system for the Vice-Chancellor's office, including balancing a commitment to move towards a paperless system where appropriate;
 - The maintenance of up to date contact lists for the people and organisations with which the University works;
 - Obtaining and assembling data and other information required by the Vice-Chancellor in the course of his work, including from other parts of the University or from external sources;
 - Working with the Students' Union, and other student representatives to ensure effective lines of communication between them and the Vice-Chancellor's office;
 - Arranging for student scholars and representatives to attend relevant industry events and to support them in the process of representing the University at those events;

- Undertaking research to assist the preparation of speeches and presentations by the Vice-Chancellor;
 - Maintaining the accuracy and timeliness of the Vice-Chancellor's office entries on the University website, in conjunction with the University's Marketing and Communications Department; and
 - Working with the University's Marketing and Communications Department to co-ordinate and assist the Vice-Chancellor's contributions to the work of that Department.
- To co-ordinate and manage events run by the Vice-Chancellor's office and contribute to other University events and activities, including:
 - Co-ordinating, with the Vice-Chancellor, the annual events programme;
 - Co-ordinating dates for key visits to the University with external people and organisations;
 - Managing arrangements, including travel and accommodation, for University visitors;
 - Corresponding with visitors to ensure that arrangements for their visit are agreed and are followed through, including aspects of travel, hospitality, meeting venues, and audio-visual requirements;
 - Managing and assembling the programme for University visitors, in conjunction with the Vice-Chancellor, to ensure that campus tour arrangements are put in place with relevant support services;
 - Arranging and coordinating the contribution of other University staff and students to key visitor programmes;
 - Managing associated correspondence with visitors;
 - Assisting with the arrangements for University Graduation events, and, specifically, managing aspects of staff attendance, helping to host guests and managing arrangements for recipients of honorary degrees;
 - Assisting, where required, with University Open Days and other events, which will, on occasion, require attendance at those held on a weekend or out of regular office hours;
 - Production and electronic distribution of a weekly newsletter to all University staff, including the co-ordination of content from across the University.

Other Duties

- The post holder will work principally under the day-to-day direction of the Vice-Chancellor, or, in the absence of the Vice-Chancellor, another designated member of the senior management team. They will be expected to monitor and maintain familiarity with political and strategic developments in higher education, and the agencies and organisations involved in the sector, to ensure that they are properly able to support the work of the Vice-Chancellor's office. A familiarity with the agri-food sector, which can be gained whilst in the role, will also be required.
- The post holder may be required to undertake any other duties commensurate to the grade and nature of the position assigned by the Vice-Chancellor from time to time, including the requirement to work outside of normal working hours and travel for work.

Person Specification (essentials and desirables)

Qualifications	Essential	Desirable	Assessed by:
1. Good honours degree	✓		A/I
2. Executive Assistant qualification		✓	A/I
Experience and Knowledge			
1. Significant experience of providing direct administrative support at senior level, including that of direct relevance to the role description	✓		A/I
2. Experience of effective liaison and working with senior contacts outside the immediate place of work	✓		A/I
3. Experience of organising high-profile visits and events	✓		A/I

4. Experience of researching and writing and editing reports	✓		A/I
5. Experience of managing budgets, office expenses and other basic aspects of financial management	✓		A/I/T
6. Experience of working in the higher education sector		✓	A/I
Skills			
1. Excellent organisational skills, including an ability to organise own work, prioritise and meet deadlines	✓		A/I/T
2. Excellent and articulate written skills, including in correspondence, the preparation of reports and the formal recording of meetings	✓		A/I/T
3. Ability to manage and interpret data and evidence of good numeracy skills	✓		A/I/T
4. Excellent IT skills (Microsoft Office, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook)	✓		A/I/T
5. Well-developed interpersonal skills, enabling effective communication with colleagues and external contacts with proven ability to convey information in a clear and accurate manner and a desire to resolve issues.	✓		A/I
6. Ability to work as a member of a team and to co-ordinate and lead team activities where required	✓		A/I
Attributes			
1. High levels of professional presentation, conduct and credibility, in order to represent the office of the Vice-Chancellor and to ensure effective communications	✓		I
2. Proactive and positive approach to work	✓		A/I
3. High levels of accuracy and attention to detail, particularly in diary and contact management.	✓		A/I/T
4. Ability to exercise discretion, tact, diplomacy when dealing with confidential matters			
5. Flexible approach to work and ability to work outside normal office hours when required, or cover for annual leave, peak workloads or illness	✓		A/I
	✓		A/I

A Application
I Interview
T Test

Conditions of Service

The national recommendations which have arisen from the negotiations between UCEA and the unions recognised at national level, the Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff (JNCHES), directly affect the terms and conditions insofar as they have been adopted by the Board of Governors.

Salary

The commencing salary will be within the range £27,924 - £30,497 per annum. The point of entry will be dependent upon relevant qualifications and experience. Salaries are paid monthly, in arrears, by credit transfer.

Contract Term

This is a full-time post. The employment may be terminated during the course of the contract by either party giving one months' notice in writing.

Hours of Work	The routine working week is 37 hours over as and when required. There may be a requirement for overtime working from time to time and time off in lieu may be allowed for agreed hours worked in excess of 37 per week.
Holidays	The annual holiday entitlement is of 22 working days, plus 3 University closure days and Bank Holidays. Annual holiday entitlement rises to 25 working days with 5 years' service. The holiday year runs from 1 August to 31 July and in the holiday year in which the employment commences or terminates the holiday entitlement will accrue on a pro-rata basis for each complete week of service. The timing of holidays is subject to the agreement of the Line Manager.
Sick Leave	During periods of certified sickness, the post-holder will be eligible to receive sick pay in accordance with the University Sick Pay Policy. The payment of sick pay is subject to compliance with the University rules for the notification and verification of sickness absence, details of which will be provided to the successful applicant upon commencement of employment.
Pension	The post-holder will be entitled to join the Harper Adams Group Pension Scheme and details will be provided to the successful applicant upon commencement of employment.
Exclusivity of Service	<p>You are required to devote your full-time attention and abilities to your duties during working hours and to act in the best interests of the University at all times. Accordingly, you must not, without written consent of the University, undertake employment or engagement including external consultancy, which might interfere with the performance of your duties or conflict with the interests of the University.</p> <p>It follows that, regardless of whether you are employed on a full-time or part-time contract, you are required to notify your line manager of any employment or engagement which you intend to undertake whilst in the employment of the University (including any such employment or engagement which commenced before your employment under this contract). Your line manager will then notify you within 10 working days whether such employment or engagement is prohibited.</p>
Criminal Convictions	<p>The post involves the opportunity for access to children and young persons under the age of 18. For this reason, the University is entitled to consider any criminal convictions, cautions or impending case(s) that it considers to be relevant to this post.</p> <p>The post is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means that applicants are not entitled to withhold information about convictions which for other purposes are "spent" under the provisions of the Act.</p> <p>Applicants must therefore complete the part of the application form declaring any criminal convictions and cautions from any court or police authority. The successful applicant will have to undergo a Criminal Records Bureau check before an appointment can be made.</p>

References

Candidates should ensure that they provide full details of the name and postal address of their referees. Please include e-mail addresses and telephone numbers wherever possible.

Referees should include your present, or most recent, employer. References will normally be taken up immediately in respect of candidates shortlisted for interview. **If you do not wish any reference to be taken up at this stage, please enter an 'X' in the relevant box provided on the application form.**

Application Procedure:

All applications should be completed and submitted using the Harper Adams e-Recruitment programme at <http://jobs.harper-adams.ac.uk>

To be submitted no later than 31 October 2021